soon as possible to address this issue. The requisite up-to-date data is being compiled.

Government would continue to make sustained efforts to seek the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen in Pak custody.

Demand of AWHRC to set up a Commission on trafficking of women and children in South Asia

475. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a representation to the SAARC Foreign Ministers, the Asian Women Human Rights Council (AWHRC) has demanded setting up of a commission to probe into trafficking in women and children in South Asia and human rights violations of these women detained as illegal immigrants;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of SAARC Foreign Ministers in general and that of the Government of India in particular with regard to the demand of AWHRC?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Representatives of the Asian Women Human Rights Council (AWHRC) and the supporting groups of the South Asian Alliance Against trafficking had asked for a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the SAARC Countries. On my request, the SAARC Foreign Ministers, who attended the Seventeenth Session of the SAARC Council of Ministers in New Delhi on December 19-20, 1996, collectively met the AWHRC representatives and the latter, in a representation to the SAARC Foreign Ministers urged setting up of a Commission to investigate trafficking in women and children in South Asia and human rights violations of women detained as illegal migrants, and through mechanisms under which affected persons can seek unconditional and non-discriminatory support and assistance.

(c) The SAARC Foreign Ministers noted the suggestions put forward by the AWHRC on the issue of trafficking in women and children in South Asian countries, which has been under consideration by SAARC, including *inter alia* an appraisal conducted recently on Girl Children in Exceptionally Difficult Circumstances (GCEDC) in the region.

Repatriation of Bangladesh refugees

476. SHRI RAJU BHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent exchange of visits between Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh, any agreement for repatriation of Bangladesh refugees was reached; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating the number of such refugees settled at various places in India and the specific arrangements for their return and resettlement?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) During the recent exchange of visits of Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh, while a formal agreement for repatriation of Bangladesh refugees was not worked out, in response to a suggestion from India, the Government of Bangladesh had indicated that a delegation including Members of Parliament from Chittagong Hill Tracts area in Bangladesh, would visit Chakma refugee camps in Tripura and encourage the refugees to return to Bangladesh. As per details received from the State Government, in August 1996, there were 49, 125 Chakma refugees in 6 refugee camps in Tripura.